

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Yucca House National Monument

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: YUHO

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Yucca House National Monument was set aside in 1919 to preserve an unexcavated Ancestral Puebloan archeological complex. By 2016, archeological research on the site will be further advanced, and public visitation will be actively encouraged. A core staff will manage the site, provide visitor orientation and protect the natural and cultural resources.

The Monument shall restore and perpetuate the natural diversity of resources, values, species, and communities and the ecological integrity of the monument area as will leave it unimpaired for the enjoyment of present and future generations. In order to identify, monitor, protect, and perpetuate the natural and cultural resources and natural processes within the monument, Mesa Verde National Park (park) will develop and support a staff of professional natural resource managers, specialists, technicians and archeologists using the best available techniques and technologies to work on monument projects. The park will develop and maintain professional and productive working relationships with other natural and cultural resource management agencies and institutions, researchers, volunteers, park neighbors, and the public towards improving the knowledge, protection, and management of the monument's natural resources. The park will minimize and compensate for unnatural human-caused disturbances originating from inside and outside the monument that could impact natural resources and natural processes.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Larry T. Wiese, Superintendent

Site: YUHO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

An appropriate and resource sensitive system of roads, trails, parking, and interpretive infrastructure is in place to provide a meaningful visitor experience. The monument's website has fully developed, up to date, and accurate natural and cultural resource section. The monument is promoted with natural resources as a significant element of the visitor experience. The lands east of Highway 491 offer expanded hiking opportunities and higher levels of biological diversity for the expanded monument.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: YUHO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

Significant progress has been made in restoring the monument's disturbed landscapes with plans to expand the restoration efforts to the newly acquired lands/easement areas. Weed invasions have been contained, shrunk, or eradicated. A MEVE-managed nursery maintains a stock of native plants. MEVE staff maintains up to date weed inventories and GIS maps. Conditions improve for pinyon-juniper health and vigor. Wetlands, springs, and riparian areas are rejuvenated. Native plant communities begin to recover, showing healthful signs of natural succession. Rare plant populations are systematically monitored and populations reestablished. Wildlife populations stabilize into a new sustainable equilibrium. Strategic placement of livestock-proof but wildlife-friendly boundary fencing is completed with a funded annual maintenance program in place. All monument wildlife is professionally monitored and managed by MEVE staff dedicated to this work. Cooperative partnerships with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe are in place.

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☒ **Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

Key park staff take direct responsibility for monitoring external threats to YUHO. Proactive park participation in community planning and discussions with other neighboring agencies and landowners helps to facilitate land and open space conservation policies and decisions that discourage the clustering of subdivisions, industrial activities, deforestation, and other developments near the monument boundaries or within migration corridors used by monument wildlife. Through purchase or the acquisition of conservation easements, the lands surrounding the previous monument are now protected from encroachment to the monument's core areas. Mineral rights within the monument have been acquired and retired. The park acquires the water rights to Aztec Spring and all other water rights on the newly expanded monument. Cortez agrees to voluntary night sky preservation policies. Approved monument plans rule out the possibility of permitting "flight seeing" tours over the monument. Air pollution levels are steadily declining and monitoring continues with professional staffing. The local power plants will be decommissioned. Natural gas facilities will be retrofitted.

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Site: YUHO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

☒ Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

The Yucca House Museum and Archive Collections will be fully accounted for, organized and staffed so that they are accessible to researchers, staff and the public through a variety of methods and media, i.e.,:
--Catalog data, artifact photographs and other scanned images of historic documents, etc., available on the world wide web and at computer workstations available in the new curatorial and research facility and other area locations.

Archeological testing has occurred or is ongoing and many tri-wall buildings have been discovered.

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Staff the monument with multi-disciplinary positions and actively encourage visitation through regularly scheduled public tours.

A small contact station is built.

Promote the location of the Monument and ensure access to the site.

Important collections from Yucca House (Aztec Springs) stored at other museum facilities will be transferred permanently back to MEVE and made accessible for research, education and exhibit.

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Site: YUHO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Through purchase or the acquisition of conservation easements, the lands surrounding the previous monument are now protected from encroachment to the monument's core areas, outlying cultural sites connected to Yucca House are included, and the area's natural biological diversity is better represented within the monument.

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Site: YUHO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The MEVE natural resource office receives the full allotment of its scheduled base increase. This fosters a core of natural resource professionals consistent with the IMR recommendations. Supplementary funds support a team of seasonal employees, volunteers, and other partners. The program promotes and supports the scientific research and partnerships needed for successful natural resource stewardship of the monument including university, government, and other researchers and participation in the Vital Signs Inventory and Monitoring program. The information management backlog is steadily reduced by developing and managing digital information and geospatial databases which also are used for managing new information as it comes in. The MEVE natural resource program has the office and storage space, vehicles, equipment, supplies, training, and fiscal support needed to be successful at YUHO. The MEVE curatorial facility and staff welcome new YUHO natural history specimens to the collection. Efforts are made to bring back long-term loan natural history collections in other institutions to consolidate them at the new Mesa Verde curatorial center.

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Site: YUHO

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Construction and development activities and other impactful projects in the monument are designed to minimize adverse resource effects, while sites are consistently surveyed in advance and activities monitored for compliance.

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Site: YUHO

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Proactive park participation in community planning and discussions with other neighboring agencies and landowners helps to facilitate land and open space conservation policies and decisions that discourage the clustering of subdivisions, industrial activities, deforestation, and other developments near the monument boundaries or within migration corridors used by monument wildlife. All monument wildlife is professionally monitored and managed by MEVE staff dedicated to this work. Cooperative partnerships with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe are in place.

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Site: YUHO

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

An appropriate and resource sensitive system of roads, trails, parking, and interpretive infrastructure is in place to provide a meaningful visitor experience.

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Site: YUHO

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

Visitation at Yucca House will increase by 25% due to promotion of park location, improvement of access road and signage, and addition of interpretative staff for visitor tours.

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Site: YUHO

EDUCATION

☒ Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

☒ Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Visitors fully understand what an unexcavated pueblo looks like and why some sites should be preserved in this manner.

The interpretation of sites at MEVE, YUHO, and the greater Mesa Verde region are tied together and visitors can comprehend the full picture of what the prehistoric landscape would have looked like through time.

HDD has been produced and coupled with a comprehensive Village Project, a virtual vision of what all of Montezuma County would have looked like from AD 550-1300 can be viewed.

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Site: YUHO

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ **Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.**

☒ **Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.**

Centered around resource preservation, the monument's & MEVE staffs enjoy interdivisional cohesiveness. Interpretive rangers and educational specialists are encouraged and expected to develop interpretive themes and media on the monument's natural resource values and issues supported by MEVE's diversified cooperating association, foundation, and educational institute. Maintenance, fire, and archeology staff and interpretive, fee, and protective rangers periodically and actively participate in YUHO natural resource monitoring, mitigation, and research projects as part of a MEVE staff integration policy. In exchange, natural resource staff periodically participates and assist with monument operations directed by the other divisions and programs. On a different level, the MEVE natural resource program provides active assistance and, when appropriate, leadership for the other two units of the Eastern Four Corners Group.

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Site: YUHO

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ **Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Senior management now plays an active and positive support role in natural resource management issues. Senior management promotes natural resource issues and concerns with the park and monument staffs, with central offices, among monument neighbors, the media, and in fund raising and planning efforts. Senior management appreciates and actively seeks the expertise and information that the natural resource program has to offer.

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